

Philosophy

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Chair, [Professor Bruce Ellis Benson](#)

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Philosophy courses train students to think in distinctively philosophical ways about the whole range of human experience. These ways include structural analysis of arguments, conceptual analysis, phenomenological description, and research into the foundations of such enterprises as science, language, politics and social organization, history, ethics, religion, psychology, and the arts. Using these special methods, courses explore the major areas of philosophy with reference to writings of both earlier and contemporary philosophers. We seek to cultivate an articulate awareness of worldviews, and an ability to think about them from a Christian perspective, to foster a positive appreciation of the life of the mind, and to lay a foundation for further work in philosophy and related disciplines such as theology and law.

The Studies in Faith and Reason general education requirement in philosophy is normally met by [PHIL 101](#). [PHIL 215](#) may also be used to meet the general education requirement. Superior students may request department permission to substitute six hours from [PHIL 216](#), [311](#), [312](#), [315](#), [316](#), [318](#), [331](#) or [341](#) to meet the requirement. Courses numbered 200 to 399 are designed as second courses in philosophy for students in other departments, as well as for Philosophy majors. Courses numbered in the 400s are more specialized.

Requirements for a major in Philosophy are 32 hours including [PHIL 101](#), [243](#), [311](#), [312](#); at least four additional hours from 300-level courses; and eight hours from 400-level courses, including at least one four-hour senior capstone course ([494](#)). An *alternative* program requires 24 hours of philosophy including [PHIL 101](#), [243](#), [311](#), [312](#); one four-hour capstone course ([494](#)), and a bridge course; plus 16 acceptable hours in a supporting field (at least 12 hours upper-division), as approved by the department. For a list of approved courses, see the [Philosophy Majors' Handbook](#). All majors are required to include at least one course on *values* ([PHIL 215](#), [216](#), [317](#), [318](#), [319](#), [328](#), [494-3](#) or approved [347](#), [447](#), and [455](#) courses), one on *rationality* ([PHIL 244](#), [331](#), [494-1](#), [494-2](#), [494-4](#), [494-5](#) or approved [347](#), [447](#), and [455](#) courses), and one on *religious issues* ([PHIL 315](#), [316](#), [341](#), [494-1](#), [494-2](#), [494-4](#), [494-5](#) or approved [347](#), [447](#), and [455](#) courses).

A departmental honors program requires an honors thesis, [499](#).

Requirements for a minor in Philosophy are 20 hours, including [PHIL 101](#) or [PHIL 215](#); [243](#), [311](#), [312](#); and six hours of electives. At least 12 hours of the 20 must be upper-division.

Philosophy Courses (PHIL)

PHIL 101. Introduction to Philosophy. Some major problems and traditions in philosophy as seen in the writings of influential philosophers of the past and present. Attention is given to learning the methods and skills distinctive of philosophical inquiry, to assessing worldviews, and to developing a Christian worldview.

PHIL 215. Contemporary Moral Problems. An introduction to the main areas of philosophy, such as ethical theory, metaphysics, and epistemology, through a consideration of their application to such moral concerns as truth telling, rights, criminal punishment, racism, affirmative action, abortion, sexual ethics, hunger, the environment, and violence. Attention is given to worldviews and to their implications for ethics, and to the development of a Christian moral philosophy.

PHIL 216. Philosophy of the Arts. An examination of philosophical issues in the arts, such as art and morality, the nature of creativity, evaluating art, and the relation of art to worldviews. (2)

PHIL 243. Introduction to Logic. Traditional and modern logic, with attention to informal arguments and informal fallacies and their application to philosophical and other reasoning. (2)

PHIL 244. Symbolic Logic. An introduction to formal systems and to propositional and predicate logic. Prerequisite: [PHIL 243](#) or permission of instructor. (2)

PHIL 311, 312. History of Philosophy. First semester: early Greece through the Renaissance. Second semester: early modern to the present. Attention is given throughout to primary source readings.

PHIL 315. Philosophy of Religion. Explores philosophical concerns arising out of theism in general and Christian theism in particular. Topics include: the reasonableness of belief in God, God's nature, the problem of evil, religious experience, miracles and revelation, and religious pluralism.

PHIL 316. Asian Philosophy. An introduction to Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, and Taoist philosophical thought, focusing on issues of ethical theory, social philosophy, philosophical theology, and philosophy of human nature. Critical examination of these ideas in comparison to their treatment in Western philosophy and Christian thought. (2)

PHIL 317x. Biomedical Ethics. An interdisciplinary consideration of ethical issues in the biological and health sciences with an emphasis on those related to medicine, including issues in biotechnology. Taught jointly with the Biology Department. Prerequisites: completion of general education requirements in science and philosophy. Can be taken as a diversity requirement.(2)

PHIL 318. Philosophy of Law. An exploration of the philosophical foundations of law, with attention paid to natural law theory, legal positivism, and legal realism, as well as related concerns bearing upon "legislating morality," punishment, free speech, justice, and equality. Readings drawn from modern, contemporary, and feminist sources. (2)

PHIL 319. Political Philosophy. Examines some of the major issues and concepts in political philosophy, including political authority, freedom and coercion, civil disobedience, and justice, as construed in the liberal, Marxist, communitarian, and feminist traditions. (2)

PHIL 328. Business Ethics. Interdisciplinary examination of ethical concerns in business and economics, including such issues as ethical conflicts in international business, truth telling and

advertising, employee rights, environmental concerns, and gender and racial issues. Substantial use of case studies. Taught jointly by the Philosophy and Economics Departments. Prerequisites: completion of general education requirements in business/economics and philosophy. (2)

PHIL 331. Philosophy of Science. An examination of observation, explanation, confirmation, and theories in the natural sciences. Special attention is given to the contribution to science of subjective and social factors as this bears on the issue of realism.

PHIL 341. Nature of Persons. The question, "What is it to be a person?" is asked from the philosophical, social, scientific, theological, and literary perspectives. Questions about personal identity, the nature of the self, the concepts of emotion and will, personal maturity (the virtues), and the role of personal narrative, and community-based roles in the formation of identity and character are addressed.

PHIL 347. Topics in Philosophy. A study of a contemporary philosopher or philosophical development of cross-disciplinary importance. Suitable for non-majors who have already taken [PHIL 101](#). Topics include: Faith and Reason, Philosophical Theology, Science and Theology, Language and Thought, Feminist Theory. (2 or 4)

PHIL 447. Advanced Topics in Philosophy. A study of a contemporary philosopher or philosophical development of cross-disciplinary importance. Suitable for philosophy majors or those having taken at least one semester of the history of philosophy ([PHIL 311, 312](#)). Topics include: Philosophical Hermeneutics, Virtue Ethics, Philosophy of Mind, Aesthetic Theory. (2 or 4)

PHIL 455. Historical Seminar. An analysis of the writings of one or more important philosophers. Figures include *Ancient*: Plato, Aristotle. *Medieval*: Augustine, Aquinas. *Modern*: Locke-Hume, Kant, Nineteenth-Century European. *Contemporary*: Phenomenology, Wittgenstein, and Contemporary Continental Thinkers. Prerequisites: [PHIL 311, 312](#). (2 or 4)

PHIL 494. Advanced Seminars in Contemporary Philosophy: (All meet senior capstone requirement)

PHIL 494-1. Epistemology. Epistemology, or the theory of knowledge, explores knowledge and related intellectual goods such as understanding, rationality, and experiential acquaintance. It investigates human intellectual powers, the extent of their reach, and whether these powers must follow a particular method or be trained to certain intellectual habits to be used to greatest effect. Typical questions asked by epistemologists include: What are the nature and limits of human reasons? What conditions must we satisfy in order to know or to have justified belief? What intellectual virtues characterize excellent intellectual agents? Do the arguments of skeptics show that we don't have knowledge or justified belief? While this course focuses on more contemporary discussions, we will also discuss the epistemologies of many historically significant philosophers. Prerequisites: [PHIL 311, 312](#).

PHIL 494-2. Metaphysics. Metaphysics asks such questions as "What is real?" and "What is our place in reality?" This course studies important twentieth-century work on classic metaphysical questions concerning the existence of God, our knowledge of reality, the nature of identity, minds, free will, essences, and natural kinds. It begins by examining our method of inquiry into such matters, as well as the concepts of realism and truth as applied to these metaphysical concerns. Prerequisites: [PHIL 311, 312](#).

PHIL 494-3. Ethical Theory. An examination of major types of ethical theory, emphasizing recent thought, along with consideration of the status of ethical theorizing as a philosophical enterprise and the prospects for a common morality in contemporary society. Investigates connections between philosophy and other disciplines, such as

psychology, political science, and theology. Seminar format. Prerequisites: [PHIL 311, 312](#).

PHIL 494-4. Pragmatism. Studies American pragmatist thinkers John Dewey, William James, C.S. Pierce, and their influence on the contemporary pragmatism of Davidson, Putnam, Quine, Rorty, and others. Prerequisites: [PHIL 311, 312](#).

PHIL 494-5. Christianity and Postmodernity. An assessment of the postmodern critique of traditional Western metaphysical, epistemological, and religious claims in the light of the Christian faith. Includes thinkers such as Derrida, Heidegger, Levinas, Marion, Milbank, Nietzsche, and Žižek. Prerequisites: [PHIL 311, 312](#).

PHIL 495. Independent Study. Guided reading and research for the advanced student. (1-4)

PHIL 496. Internship. Independent study on philosophical issues related to internship or employment experience. Requires department approval of student's proposal. Graded pass/fail. Prerequisite: junior or senior standing with Philosophy major. (2 or 4)

PHIL 499. Honors Thesis. An independent philosophical project requiring original research and/or argumentation, developed in a scholarly paper and culminating in an oral examination. By application only.

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